

REMARKS

Applicant has carefully reviewed the Examiner's September 8, 2003, Official Action and respectfully requests reconsideration based on the above amendments and the following comments.

Claims 1-13 have been cancelled. Claims 14-41 have been added and remain in the application for consideration.

In response to the Examiner's objection to the abstract and specification and rejection of claims 1-13 under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph rejection, Applicant has;

1. enclosed a new substitute abstract for that originally filed with the term "means" deleted,
2. added section headings in the specification along the lines suggested by the Examiner, and
3. deleted the term "and/or" from new independent claim 14 which corresponds to original claim 1.

Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner's objections and rejection under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph have now been overcome.

With regard to the Examiner's rejection of claim 6 under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c) as being an improper multiple dependent claim and rejection of claims 1, 10 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by German patent '421, claims 1-5 and 7-8 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable

over German patent '421 together with W091/01784, Applicant notes that the Examiner has clearly acted on claims 1-13 as originally filed and not on claims 1-13 as subsequently amended under PCT Art. 19 and Applicant's September 4, 2001 preliminary amendment submitted at the time of filing this application.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully submits that the above identified rejections are not applicable to the claims as amended under PCT Art. 19 and Applicant's September 4, 2001 preliminary amendment and therefore, requests the withdrawal of these rejections in favor of a first Office Action on the amended claims as submitted with this application.

The new set of claims comprises 28 claims, six of which are independent claims, namely claims 14, 27 and 38-41. In new independent claim 14, the function of the liquid collecting pockets (claim 6 as originally filed with the International Authority) is elaborated.

New independent claim 27 aims to protect a pivotal flap or plate member defining a liquid receiving chamber communicating with the liquid channel via an adjustable opening or slot (original claims 8 and 9). This channel makes the rectification or scrubbing process more effective. The solution of new claim 27 provides for easy control of the flow of liquid in the liquid receiving chamber by adjustment of said pivotal flap or plate member. Compared to the plate

members of the art the plate member of the present invention can be adjusted much easier and even during operation of the apparatus.

Applicant further submits that the releasable end wall of new independent claim 38 (original claims 2 and 3) is not obvious over Laycock in combination with German '421 (point 10 of the office action). The removable member (M) of Laycock comprises the upper half of the entire processing chamber of the Laycock apparatus. Accordingly, this member (M) is in no way equivalent to the removable end wall of the claimed invention. Processing chambers according to the claimed invention are often very large and heavy, making it extremely inconvenient to gain access to said chamber through an accordingly large and heavy removable member (M) as described in Laycock '994. Applicant submits that the removable end wall of the claimed invention is much more convenient when gaining access to the processing chamber.

New independent claim 39 relates to heating or cooling fluid conduits disposed in guide plates in the processing chamber (original claim 11). In point 9 of the Office Action this feature is noted to be allowable by the Examiner for which indication Applicant thanks the Examiner.

New independent claims 40 and 41 correspond respectively to new claims 14 and 27 but have been drafted to

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identify specific structural elements rather than claimed as means and a function. The new dependent claims correspond substantially to those of the original application.

Applicant submits that the invention is new and unobvious and not disclosed by the cited art. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully solicits the Examiner's early review and issuance of this application.

Respectfully submitted,

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